

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 AID-20 IGA-02 MC-02 ACDA-19 OMB-01

EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 RSR-01 /120 W
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R 131720 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1528

DOD/ DSAA/ ISA

USCINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

S E C R E T TUNIS 2077

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS: TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN REQUEST FOR SIX YEAR ARMS
ACQUISITION PROGRAM

REF: (A) STATE 066167

(B) TUNIS 0867

1. COMMENTS ON REFTEL.

A. GENERAL. NATURALLY, I AM DISAPPOINTED AT DEPARTMENT' S RESPONSE ALTHOUGH I APPRECIATE PROBLEMS OF RESOURCE LIMITATIONS AND ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL UNCERTAINTIES. IN PARTICULAR, I REGRET THAT WE ARE UNABLE TO INDICATE DEFINITELY TO GOT THAT MAP GRANT AID CAN BE EXTENDED THROUGH FY75, AND THAT THERE IS NO FORESEEABLE CHANCE OF REHABILITATING F-5 A AIRCRAFT FOR SALE TO TUNISIANS. I APPRECIATE REASONS WHY IT DIFFICULT IMPLY MULTI- YEAR COMMIT-
MENT.

B. F-5 A AIRCRAFT. WE HAD PROPOSED F-5 A AS AN EXAMPLE OF A FOLLOW- ON FIGHTER IDEAL FOR TUNISIAN NEEDS AND BECAUSE WE HAD IMPRESSION, BASED ON CHUSLOT DISCUSSIONS WITH DOD IN WASHINGTON EARLIER IN YEAR, THAT F- 5 A' S MIGHT BECOME AVAILABLE FOR REDISTRIBUTION (PRESUMABLY FROM IRAN) AS RELATIVELY MODEST REHABILITATION COST OF \$500,000. OUR
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PROJECTIONS INDICATE GOT FINANCIALLY UNABLE PURCHASE FOLLOW- ON AIRCRAFT IF PRICE GREATLY EXCEEDS THIS FIGURE. NOR WOULD THEY BE INTERESTED IN ANOTHER OBSOLETE AIRCRAFT.

C. LACK OF FY73 FMS CREDITS. THIS WILL REQUIRE SHORT- FALL ITEMS FOR THIS YEAR TO BE REDISTRIBUTED OVER REMAINING PLANNING PERIOD, RESULTING PARTICULARLY IN DELAY IN EQUIPPING ARMY' S TANK BATTALION. ALTHOUGH THIS CAN BE ABSORBED UNDER FUNDING GUIDELINES FOR FY75-79, IT WILL POSTPONE ACHIEVEMENT OF TUNISIAN ARMOR FORCE GOALS.

D. UNCERTAINTY RE MAP GRANT FOR FISCAL 75. WE MUST RECKON WITH POSSIBILITY THAT TERMINATION MAP GRANT IN FY74 COULD POSSIBLY INDUCE GOT TO RECONSIDER ITS ACCEPTANCE OF ANY LEVEL OF FMS CREDITS FROM USG BECAUSE OF BETTER TERMS FROM OTHER SOURCES. WHILE ONE COULD ARGUE QTE SO MUCH THE BETTER UNQTE, OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN US- TUNISIAN RELATIONSHIP AND PROVIDES IMPORTANT REASSURANCE FACTOR UNDERPINNING RESPONSIBLE TUNISIAN FOREIGN POLICY RESISTANT TO ENTICEMENTS FROM STATES UNFRIENDLY TO US.

2. FOLLOW- UP ACTION REQUESTED FROM WASHINGTON

A. REPLACEMENT OF F-86' . REQUEST YOUR LATEST THINKING OF TYPE, AVAILABILITY AND ROUGH COST ESTIMATE OF FOLLOW- ON AIRCRAFT TO F-86.

B. FY 73 FMS. REQUEST THAT WASHINGTON CONTINUE TO KEEP OPEN POSSIBILITY OF LATCHING ON TO END- OF- YEAR FY73 FMS FUNDS FOR TUNISIA IN ORDER THAT WE MAY AT LEAST CONTINUE PROGRAM OF EQUIPPING ARMY' S TANK BATTALION SOONEST.

C. GRANT AID FOR FISCAL 75. I AGAIN URGE THAT WASHINGTON APPROVE MAP GRANT AID PROGRAM FOR FISCAL 1975. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT CONTINUING MAP ASSISTANCE FOR TWO MORE YEARS IS ABSOLUTE MINIMUM FOR REASONS CITED IN 1, D ABOVE.

D. CLARIFICATION RE PARA 7(A) REFTEL. WE ASSUME STATEMENT IN PARA 7(A) REFTEL RE FURTHER FMS CREDIT QTE PROBABLY AT ABOUT SAME TERMS AS FY72 AGREEMENT UNQTE REFERS ONLY TO PROGRAM INTEREST LEVEL AND TEN- YEAR REPAYMENT SCHEDULE RATHER THAT \$2.2 M LOAN FIGURE. LIMITING OUR ANNYAL FUNDING AT THE \$2.2 M LEVEL WOULD ABORT GOT' S MODEST SIX YEAR ARMS ACQUISITION PROGRAM.

3. PROPOSED APPROACH TO MINISTER OF DEFENSE FARHAT. I

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INTEND, WITH DEPARTMENT' S APPROVAL, TO MAKE FOLLOWING

PRESENTATION TO FARHAT -- WHICH REPRESENTS SLIGHT MODIFICATION OF PRESENTATION PROPOSED BY DEPARTMENT IN PARA 7 REFTEL.

A. UNFORTUNATELY, USG CANNOT GIVE ASSURANCES RE FUTURE USG MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR BASIC REASON THAT USG ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS PRECLUDE PROJECTION USG PARTICIPATION MORE THAN ONE YEAR AT A TIME. NEVERTHELESS, WE WISH TO ASSURE GOT OF USG INTEREST IN TUNISIAN SECURITY. WE WANT TO CONTINUE SOME FORM OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TUNISIA OVER COMING YEARS, AND WE WILL ACTIVELY SEEK CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL. AS AMBASSADOR INDICATED TO FARHAT EARLIER, GRANT AID FUNDS ARE GRADUALLY BEING PHASED OUT.

B. IT IS OBVIOUS FROM FOREGOING THAT WE CANNOT PROVIDE ESTIMATE RE ORDER AND MAGNITUDE OF EXPECTED USG ASSISTANCE, SOMETHING WHICH WOULD HELP TUNISIANS MAKE DEFINITE PLANS WITH REFERENCE TO SIX- YEAR ARMS ACQUISITION PROGRAM. AMBASSADOR'S PERSONAL JUDGMENT IS THAT GOT CANNOT EXPECT SUFFICIENT USG FINANCING TO ENABLE GOT TO PROCEED WITH A WHOLLY US- FINANCED \$42 M PACKAGE (RE SIX- YEAR ACQUISITION PROGRAM).

C. THEREFORE, UNLESS GOT CAN OBTAIN ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER FRIENDLY NATIONS TO ASSIST IN FINANCING THIS PACKAGE, WE RECOMMEND THAT GOT PARE PACKAGE DOWN CONSIDERABLY.

D. USG WILLING CONSIDER FOLLOW- ON AIRCRAFT NEEDS, BUT AS AMBASSADOR INDICATED EARLIER, USG UNABLE TO QTE GIVE UNQTE AIRCRAFT. THEY MUST BE ABSORBED WITHIN WHATEVER USG FINANCING BECOMES AVAILABLE. AIRCRAFT WOULD PROBABLY BE FUNDED BY FMS, AND THUS BE IN FORM OF SALE.

E. WE ARE HAPPY TO REPORT THAT USG HAS AGREED TO LEND TO GOT TWO PG, ASHVILLE- CLASS SHIPS TO TUNISIAN NAVY TO ASSIST IN EXPANSION AND MODERNIZATION OF TUNISIAN NAVAL FORCES. WE WILL BE PROVIDING MORE DETAILS, BUT WOULD LIKE TO STRESS THAT THIS IS ONE- TIME TRANSACTION WITHOUT ANY COMMITMENT FOR FURTHER FOLLOW- ON ASSISTANCE AND WE EXPECT GOT TO PAY REHABILITATION, TRANSPORT AND MAINTENANCE FOR THESE SHIPS.

4. CONCLUSION: BECAUSE OF NEGATIVE NATURE OF RESPONSE I WILL HAVE TO GIVE TO MINISTER FARHAT RE HIS BASIC REQUEST IN MID- FEBRUARY, I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO OFFSET BY GIVING HIM POSITIVE ANSWER RE LOAN OF TWO SHIPS. THUS, I PLAN TO WITH- HOLD FOREGOING PRESENTATION PENDING WASHINGTON INDICATION

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LOAN OF TWO SHIPS HAS BEEN APPROVED (HOPEFULLY IN COMING WEEK) AS WELL AS PENDING RECEIPT CLARIFICATIONS REQUESTED ABOVE (PARA 2), AND DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL MY MODIFICATIONS OF PROPOSED RESPONSE (PARA 3).
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